E
241
.W33

Class E241

Book .B9W33

B9W33

WEBSTER'S ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE COMPLETION OF THE

446
327

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT,

JUNE 17, 1843.

Daniel Webster.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
U.S.A.
WASHINGTON

"A duty has been performed. A work of gratitude and patriotism is completed. This structure, having its foundations in soil, which drank deep of early revolutionary blood, has at length reached its destined height, and now lifts its summit to the skies.

We have assembled to celebrate the accomplishment of this undertaking, and to indulge, afresh, in the recollection of the great event, which it is designed to commemorate. Eighteen years, more than half the ordinary duration of a generation of mankind, have elapsed, since the corner-stone of this monument was laid. The hopes of its projectors rested on voluntary contributions, private munificence, and the general favor of the public. These hopes have not been disappointed. Donations have been made by individuals, in some cases of large amount, and smaller sums contributed by thousands. All who regard the object itself as important, and its accomplishment, therefore, as a good attained, will entertain sincere respect and gratitude for the unwearied efforts of the successive Presidents, Boards of Directors, and Committees of the Association, which has had the general control of the work. The Architect, equally entitled to our thanks and commendation, will find other reward, also, for his labor and skill, in the beauty and elegance of the obelisk itself, and the distinction which, as a work of art, it confers on him.

At a period when the prospects of further progress in the undertaking were gloomy and discouraging, the Mechanic Association, by a most praiseworthy and vigorous effort, raised new funds for carrying it forward, and saw them applied with fidelity, economy, and skill. It is a grateful duty to make public acknowledgments of such timely and efficient aid.

The last effort, and the last contribution were from a different source. Garlands of grace and elegance were destined to crown a work, which had its commencement in manly patriotism. The winning power of the sex addressed itself to the public, and all that was needed to carry the monument to its proposed height, and give to it its finish, was promptly supplied. The mothers and the daughters of the land contributed thus, most successfully to whatever of beauty is in the obelisk itself, or whatever of utility and public benefit and gratification in its completion.

Of those, with whom the plan of erecting on this spot a monument, worthy of the event to be commemorated, originated, many are now present; but others, alas! have themselves become subjects of monumental inscription. William Tudor, an accomplished scholar, a distinguished writer, a most amiable man, allied, both by birth and sentiment, to the patriots of the Revolution, died, while on public service abroad, and now lies buried in a foreign land. William Sullivan, a name fragrant of Revolutionary merit, and of public service and public virtue, who himself partook, in a high degree, of the respect and confidence of the community, and yet was always most loved where best known, has also been gathered to his fathers. And last, George Blake, a lawyer of learning and eloquence, a man of wit and of talent, of social qualities the most agreeable and fascinating, and of gifts which enabled him to exercise a large sway over public assemblies, has closed his human career. I know that in the crowds before me, there are those, from whose eyes copious tears will flow, at the mention of these names. But such mention is due to their general character, their public and private virtues and especially on this occasion, to the spirit and

zeal, with which they entered into the undertaking, which is now completed.

I have spoken only of those who are not now numbered with the living. But a long life, now drawing towards its close, always distinguished by acts of public spirit, humanity, and charity, forming a character, which has already become historical, and sanctified by public regard, and by the affection of friends, may confer, even on the living, the proper immunity of the dead, and be the fit subject of honorable mention, and warm commendation. Of the early projectors of the design of this monument, one of the most prominent, the most zealous, and the most efficient, is Thomas H. Perkins. It was beneath his ever-hospitable roof that those whom I have mentioned, and others yet living, and now present, having assembled for the purpose, adopted the first step towards erecting a monument on Bunker Hill. Long may he remain, with unimpaired faculties, in the wide field of his usefulness. His charities have distilled, like the dews of heaven; he has fed the hungry, and clothed the naked; he has given sight to the blind; and for such virtues there is a reward on high, of which all human memorials, all language of brass and stone, are but humble types and attempted imitations.

Time and nature have had their course, in diminishing the number of those whom we met here on the 17th of June, 1825. Most of the Revolutionary characters then present have since deceased, and Lafayette sleeps in his native land. Yet the name and blood of Warren are with us; the kindred of Putnam are also here; and near me, universally beloved for his character and his virtues, and now venerable for his years, sits the son of the noble-hearted and daring Prescott. Gideon Foster, of Danvers; Enos Reynolds, of Boxford; Phineas Johnson, Robert Andrews, Elijah Dresser, Josiah Cleaveland, Jesse Smith, Philip Bagley, Needham Maynard, Roger Plaisted, Joseph Stephens, Nehemiah Porter, and James Harvey, who bore arms for their country, either at Concord and Lexington, on the 19th of April, or on Bunker Hill, all now far advanced in age, have come here to-day, to look once more on the field of the exercise of their valor, and to receive a hearty outpouring of our respect.

They have long outlived the troubles and dangers of the revolution; they have outlived the evils arising from the want of a united and efficient Government; they have outlived the pendency of imminent dangers to the public liberty; they have outlived nearly all their contemporaries; but they have not outlived—they cannot outlive—the affectionate gratitude of their country. Heaven has not allotted to this generation an opportunity of rendering high services, and manifesting strong personal devotion, such as they rendered and manifested, and in such a cause as roused the patriotic fires of their youthful breasts, and nerved the strength of their arms. But we may praise what we cannot equal, and celebrate actions which we were not born to perform. *Pulchrum est benefacere republicæ, etiam bene dicere haud.*

The Bunker Hill Monument is finished. Here it stands. Fortunate in the natural eminence on which it is placed—higher, infinitely higher, in its objects and purpose, it rises over the land, and over the sea, and visible, at their homes, to three hundred thousand citizens of Massachusetts—it stands, a memorial of the last, and a monitor to the present, and all succeeding generations. I have spoken of the loftiness of its purpose. If it had been without any other design than the creation of a work of art, the granite, of which it is composed, would have slept in its native bed. It has a purpose; and that purpose gives it character. That purpose enrobes it with dignity and moral grandeur. That well known purpose it is, which causes us to look up to it with a feeling of awe. It is itself the orator of this occasion; it is not from my lips, it is not from any human lips, that that strain of eloquence is this day to flow, most competent to move and excite the vast multitudes around. The potent speaker stands motionless before them. It is a plain shaft. It bears no inscriptions, fronting to the rising sun, from which the future antiquarian shall wipe the dust. Nor does the rising sun cause tones of music to issue from its summit. But at the rising of the sun, and at the setting of the sun, in the blaze of noon-day, and beneath the milder effulgence of lunar light, it looks, it speaks, it acts, to the full comprehension of every American mind, and the awakening of glowing enthusiasm in every American heart. Its silent, but awful utterance; its deep pathos, as it brings to our contemplation the 17th of June, 1775, and the consequences which have resulted to us, to our country, and to the world, from the events of that day, and which we know must continue to rain influence on the destinies of mankind, to the end of time; the elevation with which it raises us high above the ordinary feelings of life, surpass all that the study of the closet, or even the inspiration of genius can produce. To-day it speaks to us. Its future auditories will be through successive generations of men, as they rise up before it, and gather round it. Its speech will be of patriotism and courage; of civil and religious liberty; of free government; of the moral improvement and elevation of mankind; and of the immortal memory of those who, with heroic devotion, have sacrificed their lives for their country.

In the older world numerous fabrics still exist, reared by human hands, but whose object has been lost in the darkness of ages. They are now monuments of nothing but the labor and skill which constructed them.

The mighty pyramid itself, half buried in the sands of Africa, has nothing to bring down and report to us, but the power of kings and the servitude of the people. If it had any purpose beyond that of a mausoleum, such purpose has perished from history, and from tradition. If asked for its moral object, its admonition, its sentiment, its instruction to mankind, or any high end in its erection, it is silent—silent as the millions which lie in the dust at its base, and in the catacombs which surround it. Without a just moral object,

E 241
.S9 W34

therefore, made known to man, though raised against the skies, it excites only conviction of power, mixed with strange wonder. But if the civilization of the present race of men, founded as it is, in solid science, the true knowledge of nature, and vast discoveries in art, and which is stimulated and purified by moral sentiment, and by the truths of Christianity, be not destined to destruction, before the final termination of human existence on earth, the object and purpose of this edifice will be known, till that hour shall come. And even if civilization should be subverted, and the truths of the Christian religion obscured by a new deluge of barbarism, the memory of Bunker Hill and the American Revolution will still be elements and parts of the knowledge which shall be possessed by the last man to whom the light of civilization and Christianity shall be extended.

This celebration is honored by the presence of the Chief Executive Magistrate of the Union. An occasion so National in its object and character, and so much connected with that Revolution, from which the Government sprang, at the head of which he is placed, may well receive from him this mark of attention and respect. Well acquainted with Yorktown, the scene of the last great military struggle of the Revolution, his eye now surveys the field of Bunker Hill, the theatre of the first of these important conflicts. He sees where Warren fell, where Putnam and Prescott and Stark and Knowlton and Brooks fought. He beholds the spot, where a thousand trained soldiers of England were smitten to the earth, in the first effort of Revolutionary war, by the arm of a bold and determined yeomanry, contending for liberty and their country. And while all assembled here entertain towards him sincere personal good wishes, and the high respect due to his elevated office and station, it is not to be doubted, that he enters, with true American feeling, into the patriotic enthusiasm, kindled by the occasion, which animates the millions which surround him.

His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, the Governor of Rhode Island, and the other distinguished public men, whom we have the honor to receive as visitors and guests, today, will cordially unite in a celebration connected with the great event of the Revolutionary war.

No name in the history of 1775 and 1776 is more distinguished than that of an ex-President of the United States, whom we expected to see here, but whose ill health prevents his attendance. Whenever popular rights were to be asserted, an Adams was present ; and when the time came, for the formal Declaration of Independence, it was the voice of an Adams, that shook the Halls of Congress. We wish we could have welcomed to us, this day, the inheritor of Revolutionary blood, and the just and worthy Representative of high Revolutionary names, merit and services.

Banners and badges, processions and flags, announce to us, that amidst this uncounted multitude are thousands of natives of New England, now residents in other States. Welcome, ye kindred names, with kindred blood! From the broad savannas of the South, from the newer regions of the West, from amidst the hundred thousands of men of Eastern origin, who cultivate the rich valley of the Genesee, or live along the chain of the Lakes, from the mountains of Pennsylvania, and the thronged cities of the coast, welcome, welcome ! Wherever else you may be strangers, here you are all at home. You assemble at this shrine of liberty, near the family altars, at which your earliest devotions were paid to Heaven; near to the temples of worship, first entered by you, and near to the schools and colleges, in which your education was received. You come hither with a glorious ancestry of Liberty. You bring names, which are on the rolls of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. You come, some of you, once more to be embraced by an aged Revolutionary father, or to receive another, perhaps, a last blessing, bestowed in love and tears, by a mother, yet surviving to witness, and to enjoy, your prosperity and happiness.

But if family associations and the recollections of the past, bring you hither with greater alacrity, and mingle with your greeting much of local attachment, and private affection, greeting also be given, free and hearty greeting, to every American citizen, who treads this sacred soil, with patriotic feeling, and respires with pleasure, in an atmosphere fragrant with the recollections of 1775. This occasion is respectable—nay, it is grand, it is sublime, by the nationality of its sentiment. In the seventeen millions of happy people, who form the American community, there is not one who has not an interest in this Monument, as there is not one, that has not a deep and abiding interest in that which it commemorates.

Woe betide the man, who brings to this day's worship feeling less than wholly American ! Woe betide the man, who can stand here with the fires of local resentments burning, or the purpose of fomenting local jealousies, and the strifes of local interests, festering and rankling in his heart. Union, founded in justice, in patriotism, and the most plain and obvious common interest; union, founded on the same love of liberty, cemented by blood shed in the same common cause ; union has been the source of all our glory and greatness thus far, and is the ground of all our highest hopes. This column stands on Union. I know not that it might not keep its position, if the American Union, in the mad conflict of human passions, and in the strife of parties and factions, should be broken up and destroyed. I know not that it would totter and fall to the earth, and mingle its fragments with the fragments of Liberty and the Constitution, when State should be separated from State, and faction and dismemberment obliterate forever all the hopes of the founders of our Republic, and the great inheritance of their children. It might stand. But who, from beneath the weight of mortification and shame, that would oppress him, could look up to behold it? For my part, should I live to such a time, I shall avert my eyes from it forever.

It is not as a mere military encounter of hostile armies, that the battle of Bunker Hill founds its

principal claim to attention. Yet, even as a mere battle, there were circumstances attending it, extraordinary in character and entitling it to peculiar distinctions. It was fought on this eminence; in the neighborhood of yonder city; in the presence of more spectators than there were combatants in the conflict. Men, women and children, from every commanding position, were gazing at the battle and looking for its result with all the eagerness natural to those who knew that the issue was fraught with the deepest consequences to them. Yet, on the sixteenth of June, 1775, there was nothing around this hill but verdure and culture. There was, indeed, the note of awful preparation in Boston. There was the provincial army at Cambridge with its right flank resting on Dorchester, and its left on Chelsea. But here all was peace. Tranquility reigned around.

On the seventeenth, every thing was changed.—On yonder height had arisen, in the night, a redoubt in which Prescott commanded. Perceived by the enemy at dawn, it was immediately cannonaded from the floating batteries in the river, and the opposite shore. And then ensued the hurry of preparation in Boston, and soon the troops of Britain embarked in the attempt to dislodge the colonists.

I suppose it would be difficult, in a military point of view, to ascribe to the leaders on either side, any just motive for the conflict which followed.—On the one hand it could not have been very important to the Americans to attempt to hem the British within the town by advancing one single post a quarter of a mile; while on the other hand, if the British found it essential to dislodge the American troops, they had it in their power, at no expense of life. By moving up their ships and batteries, they could have completely cut off all communication with the main land over the neck, and the forces in the redoubt would have been reduced to a state of famine in forty-eight hours.

But that was not the day for any such considerations on either side! Both parties were anxious to try the strength of their arms. The pride of England would not permit the rebels, as she termed them, to defy her to the teeth, and without for a moment calculating the cost, the British general determined to destroy the fort immediately. On the other side, Prescott and his gallant followers longed and thirsted for a conflict. They wished it, and wished it at once. And this is the true secret of the movements on this hill.

I will not attempt to describe the battle. The cannonading—the landing of the British—their advance—the coolness with which the charge was met—the repulse—the second attack—the second repulse—the burning of Charlestown—and finally the closing assault, and the slow retreat of the Americans—the history of all these is familiar.

But the consequences of the battle of Bunker Hill are greater than those of any conflict between the hostile armies of the European powers. It was the first great battle of the Revolution; and not only the first blow, but the blow which determined the contest. It did not, indeed, put an end to the war, but in the then existing hostile state of feeling, the difficulties could only be referred to the arbitration of the sword. And one thing is certain; that after the New England troops had shown themselves able to face and repulse the regulars, it was decided that peace never could be established but upon the basis of the Independence of the colonies. When the sun of that day went down, the event of independence was certain! When Washington heard of the battle he inquired if the militia had stood the fire of the regulars? And when told that they had not only stood that fire, but reserved their own till the enemy was within eight rods, and then poured it in with tremendous effect—"then," exclaimed he, "The liberties of the country are safe!"

The consequences of this battle were just of the same importance as the Revolution itself.

If there was nothing of any value in the principles of the American Revolution, then there is nothing valuable in the battle of Bunker Hill and its consequences. But if the Revolution was an era in the history of man, favorable to human happiness—if it was an event which marked the progress of man, all over the world, from despotism to liberty—then this monument is not raised without cause. Then, the battle of Bunker Hill is not an event undeserving celebrations, commemorations and rejoicings.

What then is the true and peculiar principle of the American Revolution, and of the systems of government which it has confirmed and established? Now the truth is, that the American Revolution was not caused by the instantaneous discovery of principles of government before unheard of, or the practicable adoption of political ideas, such as never had before entered into the minds of men. It was but the full developement of principles of government, forms of society, and political sentiments, the origin of all which lay back two centuries in English and American history.

The discovery of America, its colonization by the nations of Europe, the history and progress of the colonies, from their establishment, to the time when the principal of them threw off their allegiance to the respective States which had planted them, and founded governments of their own, constitute one of the most interesting trains of events in human annals. These events occupied three hundred years; during which period civilization and knowledge made steady progress in the old world; so that Europe, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, had become greatly changed from that Europe which began the colonization of America at the commencement of the fifteenth. And what is most material to my present purpose is, that in the progress of the first of these centuries, that is to say, from the discovery of America to the settlements of Virginia and Massachusetts, political and religious events took place, which most materially affected the state of society, and the sentiments of mankind, especially in England, and in parts of Continental Europe. After a few feeble and unsuccessful efforts by England, under Henry the Seventh, to plant colonies in America, no designs of that kind were prosecuted for a long period, either by the English government, or any of its subjects. Without inquiring into the causes of this long delay, its consequences are sufficiently clear and striking. England

In this lapse of a century, unknown to herself, but under the Providence of God, and the influence of events, was fitting herself for the work of colonizing North America, on such principles, and by such men, as should spread the English name and English blood, in time, over a great portion of the Western hemisphere. The commercial spirit was greatly encouraged by several laws passed in Henry the Seventh's reign; and in the same reign encouragement was given to arts and manufactures in the Eastern countries, and some not unimportant modifications of the feudal system, by allowing the breaking of entails. These, and other measures, and other occurrences, were making way for a new class of society to emerge, and show itself in a military and feudal age. A middle class, neither Barons nor great landholders on the one side, nor the mere retainers of the Crown, nor Barons nor mere agricultural laborers on the other. With the rise and growth of this new class of society, not only did commerce and the arts increase, but better education, a greater degree of knowledge, juster notions of the true ends of government, and sentiments favorable to civil liberty, began to spread abroad, and become more and more common. But the plants springing from these seeds, were of slow growth. The character of English society had indeed begun to undergo a change; but changes of national character are ordinarily the work of time. Operative causes were however, evidently in existence, and sure to produce, ultimately, their proper effect. From the accession of Henry VIIth, to the breaking out of the civil wars, England enjoyed much more exemption from war, foreign and domestic, than for a long period before, and during the controversy between the houses of York and Lancaster. These years of peace were favorable to commerce and the arts. Commerce and the arts augmented general and individual knowledge; and knowledge is the only first fountain, both of the love, and the principles of human liberty.

Other powerful causes soon came into active play. The reformation of Luther broke out, kindling up the minds of men afresh, leading to new habits of thought, and awakening in individuals energies before unknown, even to themselves. The religious controversies of this period changed society as well as religion; indeed, it would be easy to prove, if this occasion were proper for it, that they changed society to a considerable extent, where they did not change the religion of the State. The spirit of foreign and commercial adventure, therefore, on the one hand, which had gained so much strength and influence since the time of the discovery of America, and, on the other, the assertion and maintenance of religious liberty, having their source, indeed, in the Reformation, but continued, diversified, and continually strengthened by the subsequent divisions of sentiment and opinion among the reformers themselves, and this love of religious liberty drawing after them, or bringing along with them, as they always do, an ardent devotion to the principle of civil liberty also, were the powerful influences under which character was formed, and men trained for the great work of introducing English civilization, English law, and what is more than all, Anglo-Saxon blood, into the wilderness of North America. Raleigh and his companions may be considered as the creatures, principally, of the first of these causes. High-spirited, full of the love of personal adventure, excited, too, in some degree, by the hopes of sudden riches from the discovery of mines of the precious metals, and not unwilling to diversify the labors of settling a colony with occasional cruizing against the Spaniards in the West Indian seas, they crossed and re-crossed the ocean, with a frequency which surprises us, when we consider the state of navigation, and which evinces a most daring spirit. The other cause peopled New England. The May Flower sought our shores under no high-wrought spirit of commercial adventure, no love of gold, no mixture of purpose, warlike or hostile, to any human being. Like the dove from the ark, she had put forth only to find rest. Solemn prayers from the shores of the sea in Holland, had invoked for her, at her departure, the blessings of Providence. The stars which guided her were the unobscured constellations of civil and religious liberty. Her deck was the altar of the living God. Fervant prayers, from bended knees, mingled, morning and evening, with the voices of ocean, and the sighing of the wind in her shrouds. Every prosperous breeze which, gently swelling her sails, helped the Pilgrims onward in their course, awoke new anthems of praise; and when the elements were wrought into fury, neither the tempest, tossing their fragile bark like a feather, nor the darkness and howling of the midnight storm, ever disturbed, in man or woman, the firm and settled purpose of their souls, to undergo all, and to do all, that the meekest patience, the boldest resolution, and the highest trust in God, could enable human beings to suffer or to perform.

Some differences may, doubtless be traced at this day, between the descendants of the early colonists of Virginia and those of New England, owing to the different influences and different circumstances under which the respective settlements were made. But only enough to create a pleasing variety in the midst of a general resemblance.

"——— *facies, non omnibus una,*
"*Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororem.*"

But the habits, sentiments, and objects of both, soon became modified by local causes, growing out of their condition in the New World; and as this condition was essentially alike in both, and as both at once adopted the same general rules and principles of English jurisprudence, these differences gradually diminished. They gradually disappeared by the progress of time, and the influence of intercourse. The necessity of some degree of union and co-operation to defend themselves against the savage tribes, tended to excite in them mutual respect and regard. They fought together in the wars against France. The great and common cause of the Revolution bound them together by new links of brotherhood; and finally, fortunately, happily and gloriously, the present form of government united them to form the Great Republic of the World, and bound up their interest and fortunes, till the whole earth sees that there is now for them, in present possession, as as well future hope, only "One Country, One Constitution, and One Destiny."

The colonization of the tropical region, and the whole of the southern parts of the continent, by Spain and Portugal, was conducted on other principles, under the influence of other motives, and followed by far different consequences. From the time of its discovery, the Spanish Government pushed forward its settlements in America, not only with vigor, but with eagerness; so that long before the first permanent English settlement had been accomplished, in what is now the United States, Spain had conquered Mexico, Peru, and Chili; and stretched her power over nearly all the territory she ever acquired in this continent. The rapidity of these conquests is to be ascribed in a great degree, to the eagerness, not to say the rapacity of those numerous bands of adventurers who were stimulated to subdue immense regions, and take possession of them in the name of the crown of Spain. The mines of gold and silver were the excitements to these efforts, and accordingly settlements were generally made, and Spanish authority established on the immediate eve of the subjugation of territory, that the native population might be set to work by their new Spanish masters, in the mines. From these facts, the love of gold—gold not produced by industry, nor accumulated by commerce, but gold dug from its native bed in the bowels of the earth, and that earth ravished from its rightful possessors by every possible degree of enormity, cruelty and crime, was long the governing passion in Spanish wars and Spanish settlements in America. Even Columbus himself did not wholly escape the influence of this base motive. In his early voyages we find him pa-sing from island to island, inquiring every where for gold; as if God had opened the

new world to the knowledge of the old, only to gratify a passion equally senseless and sordid ; and to offer up millions of an unoffending race of men to the destruction of the sword, sharpened both by cruelty and rapacity. And yet Columbus was far above his age and country. Enthusiastic, indeed, but sober, religious and magnanimous ; born to great things and capable of high sentiments, as his noble discourse before Ferdinand and Isabella, as well as the whole history of his life shows. Probably he sacrificed much to the known sentiments of others, and addressed to his followers motives likely to influence them. At the same time it is evident that he himself looked upon the world which he discovered as a world of wealth, all ready to be seized and enjoyed.

The conquerors and the European settlers of Spanish America were mainly military commanders and common soldiers. The monarchy of Spain was not transferred to this hemisphere, but it acted in it, as it acted at home, through its ordinary means, and its true representative, military force. The robbery and destruction of the native race was the achievement of standing armies, in the right of the king, and by his authority ; fighting in his name, for the aggrandisement of his power: and the extension of his prerogatives ; with military ideas under arbitrary maxims a portion of that dreadful instrumentality by which a perfect despotism governs a people. As there was no liberty in Spain, how could liberty be transmitted to Spanish colonies ?

The colonies of English America were of the people, and a people already free. They were of the middle, industrious, and already prosperous class, the inhabitants of commercial and manufacturing cities, among whom liberty first revived and respired, after a sleep of a thousand years, in the bosom of the dark ages. Spain descended on the new world in the armed and terrible image of her monarchy and her soldiery : England approached it in the winning and popular garb of personal rights, public protection and civil freedom. England transplanted liberty to America ; Spain transplanted power. England, through the agency of private companies, and the efforts of individuals, colonized this part of North America, by industrious individuals, making their own way in the wilderness, defending themselves against the savages, recognizing their right to the soil, and with a general honest purpose of introducing knowledge as well as Christianity among them. Spain stooped on South America, like a falcon on its prey. Every thing was gone. Territories were acquired, by fire and sword. Cities were destroyed by fire and sword. Hundreds of thousands of human beings fell by fire and sword. Even conversion to Christianity was attempted by fire and sword.

Behold, then, fellow citizens, the difference resulting from the operation of the two principles ! Here, to-day, on the summit of Bunker-Hill, and at the foot of the monument, behold the difference ! I would that the fifty thousand voices present could proclaim it, with a shout which should be heard over the globe. Our inheritance was of liberty, secured and regulated by law, and enlightened by religion and knowledge ; that of South America was of power, stern, unrelenting, tyrannical, military power. And look to the results, on the general and aggregate happiness of the human race. And behold the results, in all the regions conquered by Cortez and Pizarro, and the contrasted results here. I suppose the territory of the United States may amount to one eighth or one tenth of that colonized by Spain on this continent, and yet in all that vast region there are but between one and two millions of European color and European blood : while in the United States there are fourteen millions who rejoice in their descent from the people of the more northern part of Europe.

But we follow the difference, in the original principle of colonization, and in its character and objects, still further. We must look to the moral and intellectual results ; we must consider the consequences, not only as they show themselves in the greater or less multiplication of men or the supply of their physical wants—but in their civilization, improvement and happiness. We must inquire what progress has been made in the true science of liberty, and in the knowledge of the great principles of self-government.

I would not willingly say any thing on this occasion, discourteous to the new governments, founded on the demolition of the power of the Spanish monarchy. They are yet on their trial, and I hope for a favorable result. But truth, sacred truth, and fidelity to the cause of civil liberty, compels me to say, that hitherto they have discovered quite too much of the spirit of that monarchy, from which they separated themselves. Quite too frequent resort is made to military force ; and quite too much of the substance of the people consumed, in maintaining armies, not for defence against foreign aggression only, but for enforcing obedience to domestic authority. Standing armies are the oppressive instruments for governing the people, in the hands of hereditary and arbitrary monarchs. A military republic, a government founded on mock elections, and supported only by the sword, is a movement indeed, but a retrograde and disastrous movement, from the monarchial systems. If men would enjoy the blessings of Republican government, they must govern themselves by reason, by mutual counsel and consultation, by a sense and feeling of general interest, and by the acquiescence of the minority in the will of the majority, properly expressed; and above all, the military must be kept, according to the language of our bill of rights, in strict subordination to the civil authority.—Wherever this lesson is not both learned and practised, there can be no political freedom. Absurd, preposterous is it—a scoff and a satire on free forms of constitutional liberty, for constitutions and frames of government to be prescribed by military leaders, and the right of suffrage to be exercised at the point of the sword.

Making all allowance for situation and climate, it cannot be doubted by intelligent minds, that the difference now existing between North and South America is justly attributable, in a great degree, to political institutions. And how broad that difference is! Suppose an assembly, in one of the valleys, or on the side of one of the mountains of the southern half of the hemisphere, to be held, this day, in the neighborhood of a large city ;—what would be the scene presented ? Yonder is a volcano, flaming and smoking, but shedding no light, moral or intellectual. At its foot is the mine, yielding, perhaps, sometimes, large gains to capital, but in which labor is destined to eternal and unrequited toil, and rewarded only by penury and beggary. The city is filled with armed men ; not a free people, armed and coming forth voluntarily to rejoice in a public festivity ; but hireling troops, supported by forced loans, excessive impositions on commerce, or taxes wrung from a half fed, and a half clothed population. For the great there are palaces covered with gold ; for the poor there are hovels of the meanest sort. There is an ecclesiastical hierarchy enjoying the wealth of princes ; but there are no means of education to the people. Do public improvements favor intercourse between place and place ? So far from this, that the traveler cannot pass from town to town, without danger, every mile, of robbery and assassination. I would not overcharge, or exaggerate this picture ; but its principal sketches are all too true.

And how does it contrast with the scene now actually before us ? Look round upon these fields ; they are verdant and beautiful, well cultivated, and at this moment loaded with the riches of the early harvest. The hands which till them are free owners of the soil, enjoying equal rights, and protected by law from oppression and tyranny. Look to the thousand vessels in our sight, filling the harbor, or covering the neighboring sea. They are the instruments of a profitable commerce, carried on by men who know that the profits of their hardy enterprize, when they make them, are their own ; and this commerce is encouraged and regulated by wise laws, and defended, when need be, by the valor and patriotism of the country. Look to that fair city, the abode of so much diffused wealth, so much general happiness and comfort ; so much personal independence, and so much general knowledge. She fears no forced contributions, no siege or sacking from military leaders of rival factions.—The hundred temples, in which her citizens worship God, are in no danger of sacrilege. The regular administration of the laws encounters no obstacle. The long processions of children and youth, which you see this day, issuing by thousands from the free schools, prove the care and anxiety with which a popular government provides for the education and morals of the people. Every where there is order; every where there is security. Every where the law reaches to the highest, and reaches to the lowest, to protect him in his rights, and to restrain him from wrong ; and over all hovers liberty, that liberty which our fathers fought, and fell for, on this very spot, with her eye ever watchful, and her eagle wing ever wide out spread.

The colonies of Spain, from their origin to their end were subject to the sovereign authority of the kingdom. Their government, as well as their commerce, was a strict home monopoly. If we add to this, the established usage of filling important posts in the administration of the Colonies,

exclusively by natives of Old Spain, thus cutting off forever all hopes of honorable preferment from every man born in the Western hemisphere, causes enough rise up before us at once, to account fully for the subsequent history and character of these provinces. The Viceroys and Provincial Governors of Spain were never at home, in their governments in America. They did not feel that they were of the people whom they governed. Their official character and employment have a good deal of resemblance to those of the Pro consuls of Rome, in Asia, Sicily and Gaul; but obviously no resemblance to those of Carver and Winthrop, and very little to those of the Governors of Virginia after that Colony had established a popular house of Burgesses.

The English Colonists in America, generally speaking, were men who were seeking new homes in a new world.—They brought with them their families and all that was most dear to them. This was especially the case with the colonists of Plymouth and Massachusetts. Many of them were educated men, and all possessed their full share, according to their social condition, of the knowledge and attainments of that age. The distinctive characteristic of their settlement, is the introduction of the civilization of Europe into a wilderness, without bringing with it the political institutions of Europe. The arts, sciences and literature of England came over with the settlers. That great portion of the common law, which regulates the social and personal relations and conduct of men, came also. The jury came; the habeas corpus came; the testamentary power came, and the law of inheritance and descent came also, except that part of it which recognizes the rights of primogeniture, which either did not come at all, or soon gave way to the rule of equal partition of estates among children. But the monarchy did not come, nor the aristocracy, nor the church as an estate of the realm. Political institutions were to be framed anew, such as should be adapted to the state of things. But it could not be doubtful, what should be the nature and character of these institutions. A general social equality prevailed among the settlers, and an equality of political rights seemed the natural, if not the necessary consequence. After forty years of revolution, violence and war, the people of France have placed at the head of the fundamental instrument of their government, as the great boon obstained by all their sufferings and sacrifices, the declaration, that all Frenchmen are equal before the law. What France had reached only by the expenditure of so much blood and treasure, and the exhibition of so much crime, the English colonists obtained, by simply changing their place, carrying with them the intellectual and moral culture of Europe, and the personal and social relations to which they were accustomed, but leaving behind their political institutions. It has been said with much veracity, that the felicity of the American colonists consisted in their escape from the past. This is true, so far as respects political establishments but no further.—They brought with them a full portion of all the riches of the past, in science, in art, in morals, religion and literature. The Bible came with them. As it is not to be doubted, that to the free and universal reading of the Bible, is to be ascribed in that age, ascribed in every age, that men were much indebted for right views of civil liberty. The Bible is a book of faith, and a book of doctrine; but it is also a book, which teaches man his own individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man. Bacon, and Locke, and Milton and Shakspeare also came with them. They came to form new political systems, but all that belonged to cultivated man, to family, to neighborhood, to social relations accompanied them. In the Doric phrase of one of our own historians, "they came to settle on bare creation;" but their settlement in the wilderness nevertheless, was not a lodgment of nominal tribes, a mere resting place of roaming savages. It was the beginning of a permanent community, the fixed residence of cultivated men. Not only was English literature read, but English, good English, was spoken and written, before the axe had made way to let in the sun upon the habitations and fields of the settlers. And whatever may be said to the contrary, a correct use of the English language is, at this day, more general throughout the United States, than it is throughout England herself. But another grand characteristic is, that in the English colonies, political affairs were left to be managed by the colonists themselves. There is another fact wholly distinguishing them in character as it has distinguished them in fortune, from the colonists of Spain. Here lies the foundation of that experience in self-government, which had preserved order, and security, and regularly amidst the play of popular institutions. Home government was the secret of the prosperity of the North American settlements. The more distinguished of the New England colonists, with a most remarkable sagacity, and a long-sighted reach into futurity, refused to come to America, unless they could bring with them charters providing for the administration of their affairs in this country. They saw from the first, the evils of being governed in the new world, by consuls held in the old. Acknowledging the general superiority of the crown, they still insisted on the right of passing local laws, and of local administration. And history teaches us the justice and the value of this determination, in the example of Virginia. The attempts early to settle that colony failed, sometimes with the most melancholy and fatal consequences, from want of knowledge, care and attention on the part of those who had the charge of their affairs in England; and it was only after the issuing of the third charter, that its prosperity fairly commenced. The cause was that by that third charter, the People of Virginia, (for by this time they so deserve to be called,) were allowed to constitute and establish the first popular representative Assembly, which ever convened on this continent, the Virginia House of Burgesses.

Here, then, are the great elements of our political system originally introduced, early in operation, and ready to be developed, more and more as the progress of events should justify or demand.

Escape from the existing political systems of Europe; but the continued enjoyment of its sciences and arts, its literature, and its manners; with a series of improvements upon its religious and moral sentiments and habits; Home governments; or the power of passing local laws, with a local administration.

Equality of rights.

Representative systems.

Free forms of Government, founded on popular Representation.

Few topics are more inviting, or more fit for philosophical discussion, than the action and influence of the new world upon the old; or the contributions of America to Europe.

Her obligations to Europe for science and art, laws, literature and manners, America acknowledges as she ought, with respect and gratitude. And the people of the United States, descendants of the English stock, grateful for the treasures of knowledge derived from their English ancestors, acknowledge also, with thanks and filial regard, that among those ancestors, under the culture of Hampden and Sydney, and other assiduous friends, that seed of popular liberty first germinated, which on our soil has shot up to its full height, until its branches overshadow all the land.

But America has not failed to make returns. If she has not cancelled the obligation, or equalled it by others of like weight, she has, at least, made respectable advances, and some approaches towards equality. And she admits, that standing in the midst of civilized nations, and in a civilized age—a nation among nations—there is a high part which she is expected to act, for the general advance of human interests and human welfare.

American mines have filled the mints of Europe with the precious metals. The productions of the American soil and climate have poured out their abundance of luxuries for the tables of the rich, and of necessaries for the sustenance of the poor. Birds and animals of beauty and value have been added to the European stocks; and transplantations from the transcendant and unequalled riches of our forests have mingled themselves profusely with the elms, and ashes, and druical oaks of England.

America has made contributions far more vast. Who can estimate the amount, or the value, of the augmentation of the commerce of the world, that has resulted from America? Who can imagine to himself, what would be the shock to the Eastern Continent, if the Atlantic were no longer traversable, or there were no longer American productions, or American markets?

But America exercises influences, or holds out examples for the consideration of the Old World, of a much higher, because they are of a moral and political character.

America has furnished to Europe proof of the fact that popular institutions, founded on equality and the principle of representation, are capable of maintaining governments—able to secure the rights of person, property and reputation.

America has proved that it is practicable to elevate the mass of mankind—that portion which in Europe is called the laboring, or lower class—to raise them to self respect,

to make them competent to act a part in the great right and great duty, of self-government; and this she has proved may be done by education and the diffusion of knowledge. She holds out an example, a thousand times more enchanting than ever was presented before, to those nine-tenths of the human race who are born without hereditary fortune or hereditary rank.

America has furnished to the world the character of Washington! And if our American institutions had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind.

Washington! "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!" Washington is all our own! The enthusiastic veneration and regard in which the people of the United States hold him, prove them to be worthy of such a countryman; while his reputation abroad reflects the highest honor on his country and its institutions. I would cheerfully put the question to-day to the intelligence of Europe and the world, what character of the century, upon the whole, stands out in the relief of history, most pure, most respectable, most sublime; and I doubt not, that by a suffrage approaching to unanimity, the answer would be Washington!

This structure, by its uprightness, its solidity, its durability, is no unfit emblem of his character. His public virtues and public principles were as firm as the earth on which it stands; his personal motives, as pure as the serene heaven in which its summit is lost. But, indeed, though a fit, it is an inadequate emblem. Towering high above the column which our hands have builded, beheld, not by the inhabitants of a single city or a single State—ascends the colossal grandeur of his character, and his life. In all the constituents of the one—in all the acts of the other—in all its titles to immortal love, admiration and renown—it is an American production. It is the embodiment and vindication of our trans-Atlantic liberty. Born upon our soil—of parents also born upon it—never for a moment having had a sight of the old world—instructed, according to the modes of his time, only in the spare, plain, but wholesome elementary knowledge which our institutions provide for the children of the people—growing up beneath and penetrated by the genuine influences of American society—growing up amidst our expanding, but not luxurious civilization—partaking in our great destiny of labor, our long contest with unreclaimed nature and uncivilized man—our agony of glory, the war of independence—our great victory of peace, the formation of the Union and the establishment of the Constitution—he is all—all our own! That crowded and glorious life—

> "Where multitudes of virtues passed along,
> Each pressing foremost, in the mighty throng
> Contending to be seen, then making room
> For greater multitudes that were to come;—"

that life was the life of an American citizen.

I claim him for America. In all the perils, in every darkened moment of the state, in the midst of the reproaches of enemies and the misgiving of friends—I turn to that transcendant name for courage, and for consolation. To him who denies, or doubts whether our fervid liberty can be combined with law, with order, with the security of property, with the pursuits and advancement of happiness—to him who denies that our institutions are capable of producing exaltation of soul and the passion of true glory—to him who denies that we have contributed any thing to the stock of great lessons and great examples—to all these I reply by pointing to Washington!

And now, friends and fellow citizens, it is time to bring this discourse to a close.

We have indulged in gratifying recollections of the past, in the prosperity and pleasuses of the present, and in high hopes of the future. But let us remember that we have duties and obligations to perform, corresponding to the blessings which we enjoy. Let us remember the trust, the sacred trust, attaching to the rich inheritance which we have received from our fathers. Let us feel our personal responsibility, to the full extent of our power and influence, for the preservation of our institutions of civil and religious liberty. And let us remember that it is only religion, and morals, and knowledge, that can make men respectable and happy under any form of government. Let us hold fast the great truth that communities are responsible, as well as individuals; that no government is respectable which is not just; that without unspotted purity of public faith, without sacred public principle, fidelity and honor—no mere form of government, no machinery of laws, can give dignity to political society. In our day and generation let us seek to raise and improve the moral sentiment, so that we may look, not for a degraded, but for an elevated and improved future. And when we, and our children, shall all have been consigned to the house appointed for all living, may love of country—and pride of country—glow with equal fervor among those to whom our names and our blood shall have descended! And then, when honored and decrepid age shall lean against the base of this monument, and troops of ingenuous youth shall be gathered round it, and when the one shall speak to the other of its objects, the purposes of its construction, and the great and glorious events with which it is connected—there shall rise, from every youthful breast, the ejaculation—"thank God, I—I also—am an American."

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY REDDING & CO., 8 STATE STREET.

1843.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 800 966 6